

Appl. No.: 09/857,635
Group Art Unit: 1712
Response to Paper No. 8

REMARKS

Claims 11-15, 17-27 and 29-33 are currently pending in the instant application.

In Paper No. 8, the Examiner indicates that claim 32 is allowed. Additionally, in Paper No. 8, the Examiner indicates that claims 16, 19 and 27-31 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In Paper No. 8, the Examiner rejects claims 21, 22 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 4,732,213 of Bennett, et al. ("Bennett"). In Paper No. 8, the Examiner also rejects claims 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 2,281,810 of Stone ("Stone"). In Paper No. 8, the Examiner also rejects claims 21 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being unpatentable over Bennett or Stone. Finally, in Paper No. 8, the Examiner rejects claims 11-15, 17, 18 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,465,403 of Skee.

While not necessarily agreeing with the Examiner with respect to any of the rejections, arguments and/or contentions set forth in Paper No. 8, Applicants have amended claims 11 and 21 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 16 and 28, respectively, in an effort to expedite allowance of the instant application. Additionally, Applicants have added new claim 33 which is essentially a duplicate of original claim 21 further incorporating the allowable subject matter of claim 27.

The amendments to claims 11 and 21 are supported by previously presented claims 16 and 28. New claim 33 is supported by previously presented claims 21 and 27. No new matter has been introduced. The amendments to the claims are proper after final rejection as they place the application in a condition for allowance, as explained below. A complete listing of all claims ever presented is included herein in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.121(c). Entry of the amendments to the claims is therefore proper and respectfully requested.

In Paper No. 8, the Examiner indicates that claims 16, 27 and 28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 16 has been incorporated into claim 11 from which it depended. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 11 and claims 12-15 and 17-20, which

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depend therefrom, are now allowable. Claim 28 has been incorporated into claim 21 from which it depended. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 21 and claims 22-27 and 29-31 which depend therefrom, are now allowable. New claim 33 is directed to the subject matter of claim 27, rewritten in independent form.

In view of the amendments made herein and the remarks set forth above, Applicants submit that the claims patentably distinguish over the prior art of record and known to Applicants, either alone or in combination. Accordingly, reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections and a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

ILONA LANGE, *et al.*

July 26, 2004
(Date)

By:

AARON R. ETTELMAN

Registration No. 42,516

COGNIS CORPORATION

300 Brookside Avenue

Ambler PA 19002

Telephone: (215) 628-1413

Facsimile: (215) 628-1345

E-Mail: AARON.ETTELMAN@COGNIS-US.COM

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